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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER HOSTS FIRST OFFICIAL RAMADAN DINNER FOR WOMEN

REF: A. KUWAIT 2924

[1](#)B. KUWAIT 2900

[1](#)1. (U) On October 31 Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah hosted a 'Ghabqa' traditional Ramadan late night dinner for a group of Kuwaiti women, marking the first time an official dinner has been held for women by the Prime Minister. The Ghabqa was held at the Prime Minister's residence, Dar Salwa, with press, female ruling family members, and leading Kuwaiti female professionals in attendance. Attendees were effusive in their praise for the event, many saying that it marked the opening of a chapter in government-to-women dialogue which they had long sought. The PM said that the Amir's leadership was responsible for allowing women to take part in the political process and that he was grateful to be able to host such an event, coming on the heels of the historic May 16 decision to grant women their full political rights.

[1](#)2. (SBU) The Prime Minister invited almost 100 women to the event, although a handful of men were also included. The evening celebrated women's accomplishments. Female ruling family members, including two of the PM's granddaughters, stood in the receiving line next to the PM as the guests made their entrance. Islamists and moderates as well as veiled and uncovered women, among them princesses, engineers, writers, lawyers, artists, entrepreneurs, activists, academics, journalists mingled as the PM shook each and every hand. The dinner itself lasted over an hour and was marked by the PM's informal chatting with his guests. Several of his guests later told the Political Assistant that they "felt as if he (the PM) was like their father."

[1](#)3. (U) Among the attendees were Shaykha Amthal Al-Ahmad, the Amir's full sister and the Chairperson of the Voluntary Action Committee, which coordinates volunteer groups within Kuwait. Shaykha Husa Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the Crown Prince's daughter also attended. She was joined by recently appointed Minister of Planning and Minister of State for Administrative Affairs Dr. Ma'souma Al-Mubarak, who thanked the Prime Minister for the dinner, stating that it signaled "the great attention that the Kuwaiti leadership grants to women." Also included were Fatima Al-Sabah, one of the two recently appointed members of the Municipal Council, and Sarah Al-Duwaisan, a former undersecretary in the Ministry of Planning.

[1](#)4. (U) Other notables in attendance included Lulwa Al-Mulla, Secretary General of the Women's Cultural Society; Suad

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Abdullah, a leading Kuwaiti actress; Bibi Al-Marzouk, editor-in-chief of Al-Anba newspaper; Suad Al-Humaidi, economist; Fawzia Al-Baher, Municipal Council member and engineer; Mariam Al-Saleh, artist; Maha Al-Barges, Human Rights Society board member; Dr. Farida Al-Habib, Head of Cardiology at the Military Hospital and the PM's physician; and Dr. Haila Al-Mekaimi, political science professor at Kuwait University.

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